

Spiraea japonica var. *fortunei* (Japanese Spiraea,
Japanese Meadowsweet)
Rosaceae (Rose Family)

Initial Introduction and Expansion in Range

Spiraea japonica var. *fortunei*, a native of Japan, Korea and China was originally introduced to the northeast United States in the late 1800's as an ornamental shrub. It has since spread from the Northeast and is naturalized in much of the Southeast and Midwest. Currently, *S. japonica* var. *fortunei* is spreading and posing a threat to natural areas in the mountains of North Carolina. The showy pink flowers of this shrub continue to make it a popular landscape plant that is commonly available commercially.

An aggressive invader in the wild, a single plant of *S. japonica* var. *fortunei* produces hundreds of seeds that can remain viable in the soil for many years. The seeds are typically dispersed by water and deposited along stream banks, providing an effective avenue for invasion into natural areas.

Description and Biology

- Multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub growing 3 to 6 feet tall.
- Slender, reddish brown stems may be hairy or smooth.
- Alternate, egg-shaped leaves are 1 to 3 inches long and have toothed margins.
- Flat-topped clusters of rosy-pink flowers are found at the tips of the branches in June and July.
- Small, shiny capsules form in the late summer and contain seeds measuring about 0.10 of an inch long.
- Naturally variable in form with many varieties in the horticultural trade.